

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

VA ST. LOUIS HEALTH CARE WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE



FALL ISSUE 2013

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Enhancing Services for Women Veterans

As part of the mission to provide comprehensive care for women Veterans at St. Louis VA Health Care System, we have hired OB/GYN Dr. Haifaa Younis to provide specialty services for women veterans. This includes colposcopy, endometrial biopsy, IUD insertion and removal, cryotherapy, and pessary. Due to Dr. Younis' extensive travel, her schedule does not currently permit these services daily, and providers working with her are cross-training to ensure these services will become more readily available by April, 2014. Providers from CBOC's are spending time working with the providers in Women's Clinic to refresh their skills to perform well-woman examinations, and will be performing these examinations within their own CBOC's by the end of the year, making health care more accessible for women veterans.

Common Issues for Women Veterans

Understanding a woman's military experience is vital to understanding her health. Women are on the front lines, serving alongside men in many of the same capacities. They may have lifelong effects from conditions of their deployments or exposure to combat or military sexual trauma (MST), like their male counterparts. Some common issues for women Veterans seen at VA are: Musculoskeletal conditions such as back and joint pain; Mental Health conditions such as depression, PTSD, and anxiety disorders; Hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol; MST—1 in 5 women seen by VA.



Upcoming Events

- **Nov 16, 2013** - Tribute to Women Veterans . At Christy Banquet Center.
- **Nov 16 2013** - St. Charles VSO Health Fair
- **Nov 25, 2013** - Congressman Blaine Luetkemeyer Veterans Workshop., City Hal, Troy, MO 12:30-2 PM
- **Dec. 5, 2013** - Wells Fargo Veteran Expo 4-7:30 PM, at Wells Fargo.



Program Mission

Women Veterans Health Care addresses the health care needs of women Veterans and works to ensure that timely, equitable, high-quality, comprehensive health care services are provided in a sensitive and safe environment at VA health facilities nationwide. We strive to be a national leader in the provision of health care for women, thereby raising the standard of care for all women.

Projects

- The VAMC – John Cochran Division seeks to create a "Women Centric Veteran Imaging and Procedure" project. The project will be located on the Second Floor, in the former MRI suite. There is approximately 3,200 square feet in this area which will be renovated into the new Women Centric Imaging Center.
- Telehealth has other new projects been deployed in upcoming newsletters and new projects are being developed.

Stay Tuned for Updates.

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Women Veterans Celebrating Veterans Day

As we celebrate Veterans Day on November 11, Women's Health Services (WHS) is proud to focus on the role women have played in the United States Armed Forces. Out of a total veteran population of approximately 23 million, 7.9% are military women; and with more women entering military service, that number is expected to increase. Women, alongside their male counterparts, have served in peace and at war all over the world and most recently in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND).

During World War II, almost 400,000 women served in the United States and overseas in Europe, North Africa and the Far East through the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marines, and civilian relief organizations. Following World War II, 7,500 military women, including nurses, served in Vietnam War. At the time of the Persian Gulf War, Operations Desert Shield and Storm involved over 40,000 women in which 15 were killed and two were captured and held by Iraqi forces. According to the Department of Defense, in 2008, women made up 11% of the military force in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is estimated that, over the past six years, 180,000 women served in combat support roles and experienced violence firsthand.

Women veterans returning home are experiencing not only post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) but a mental

health issue much more prevalent among women due to gender; of the 60,000 veterans diagnosed by the Veterans Administration as having PTSD, 22% of the women suffer from "military sexual trauma" (involving either sexual assault or harassment).

In rebuilding their lives after military service, some women veterans are finding re-entry difficult and their wartime service misunderstood. A growing number are ending up homeless, many of them with children. Facilities and programs for veterans, typically geared to meet men's needs, often overlook the unique challenges women face. As women veterans reach out to VA hospitals and agencies for care and support, VA officials estimate that the number of military women utilizing the VA will double in the next five years.

Resource Information

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*"Here's to a Strong Women, may we Know them,
may we Be them, may we Raise them."*